

A word to the wise

It has come to light that the Soviets have said a flat *nyet!* to an American request that very high-altitude reconnaissance flights be permitted over Russian territory to monitor adherence to provisions of SALT-2.

The request had been put to the Kremlin because of the blow U.S. intelligence suffered by the closing down of two "listening" posts in Iran by the revolutionary regime there. We assume that the Carter administration sweetened the plea by reminding the Soviets that approval would surely win them points in the national debate over SALT-2.

What bothers us, however, is the administration's unwillingness to tell both the people and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is presently holding hearings on the treaty, about the Russians' refusal.

The matter of the treaty's verifiability weighs heavily on the minds of many people, so it is important for the administration to be as absolutely candid as possible. To be otherwise is to ruin chances of the treaty's acceptance.